

U.S. EMBASSY OTTAWA PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SECTION COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS PROGRAM

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Funding Opportunity Title: U.S. Speaker and Specialist Program for the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Canada
Funding Opportunity Number: DOS-Ottawa-PD-FY23
NOFO Start Date: December 22, 2022
NOFO Closing Date: February 17, 2023
CFDA Number: 19.040 - U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy Section Programs

A) PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Public Diplomacy Section of the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Canada (PD), U.S. Department of State, announces an open competition to support the U.S. Embassy Speaker Program in Canada. Through this cooperative agreement, PD plans to support approximately 30 to 60 traveling and virtual programs, engaging all priority regions of Canada. Strictly subject to the availability of funds, PD expects to select one program implementer for a grant award up to USD \$250,000.

Given the impact of COVID-19 and uncertainty related to the ability to travel and host in-person events, we are requesting proposals that allow for scaling up/down of activities and that provide virtual alternatives to in-person programming.

Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, the applicant's submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

Authorizing legislation, type, and year of funding: Funding authority rests in the Smith-Mundt Act and Fulbright Hays Act. The source of funding is FY 2023 U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy Section Funding.

Funding Opportunity Description:

The U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy Section in Ottawa is soliciting proposals for a cooperative agreement as specified below from nongovernmental organizations and other legally recognized non-profit institutions that meet U.S. and Canadian technical and legal requirements to develop and implement educational and cultural programs.

1) U.S. Speaker and Specialist Program for the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Canada:

This program will connect U.S. experts with Canadian audiences and institutions on topics of strategic importance to the United States. Programs are conducted in-person and/or through

virtual platforms, and proposals should outline how an organization will address both options. Traveling programs generally range from two days to one week in length. Virtual programs usually take place on a single specified date and time and may be part of a continuing series. The U.S. Speaker and Specialist Program will promote an understanding of U.S. strategic priorities, policies, and institutions and build linkages between U.S. and Canadian experts, audiences, and institutions. Speakers will address topics identified by PD that will advance its strategic goals. Speakers will be programmed with a variety of audiences and at a wide range of Canadian institutions.

The following strategic areas in the [Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership](#) from which the recipient should be prepared to identify and recruit experts include, but are not limited to:

- Accelerating Climate Ambitions
- Advancing Diversity and Inclusion
- Building Global Alliances
- Building Back Better
- Bolstering Security and Defense
- Combatting COVID-19

At PD's discretion, experts in other priority areas, including but not limited to education, culture, and the arts, may also be included in this project. This project will **not** include recruitment and programming of performing arts groups to tour Canada. In the case that PD identifies the expert, the recipient will not provide recruitment services but will provide all other logistical and administrative support required for the expert's travel to Canada or virtual participation in an event to include the coordination, purchase and provision of international and domestic travel, lodging, per diem and honoraria.

2) Recipient's Role:

a) Based on specific topics within the strategic priority parameters provided by PD, **research and provide names, with justifications, of U.S. experts in policy priority fields who are willing to travel to Canada.** The recipient's role includes, but is not limited to, contacting professional organizations, reviewing biographical information, conducting online searches (e.g. YouTube videos that provide evidence of speaking ability) and checking references. Resumes for potential speakers should be forwarded to PD for review and approval.

b) **Contact speakers identified by PD following PD's review and approval.** The recipient's role includes, but is not limited to, contacting the identified individual, liaising with them on their interest in and availability to travel to Canada, reviewing biographical information, conducting online searches (e.g. YouTube videos that provide evidence of speaking ability) and checking references. For virtual programs that will include no travel, the recipient will also be responsible for logistical arrangements including providing an appropriate virtual platform, interpretation, and closed captioning, design of landing page, conducting pre- and post-event surveys and recording of the event.

- c) **Process all necessary logistical arrangements for speakers to travel to Canada, as directed by PD.** Arrange ticketing in accordance with the Fly America Act, as directed or approved by PD, and arrange lodging, per diem, cash advances, and other logistics such as travel insurance and required immunizations for international and Canadian domestic travel (includes flight and ground transportation) as necessary or directed. This may occasionally involve changes to itineraries at the last minute.
- d) **Request and obtain a summary report** (in accordance with guidelines provided by PD) from the speaker after the program is completed and then forward as submitted (i.e., unedited) to PD.
- e) As directed by PD, **organize any pre-event coordination calls with speakers, pre-trip and post-trip press engagement, and other similar amplification events.**
- f) **Develop and administer pre- and post-program surveys** to measure the impact of speakers' programs, and gather audience feedback that informs the structure, format, and potentially other technical aspects of the speakers' programs.
- g) **Provide miscellaneous administrative support for speakers** as requested by PD.
- h) **Provide accessibility services** including interpretation, closed captioning, and event landing pages and online platforms for streaming both in person and virtual programs.

3) U.S. Government Role (through PD)

- a) PD offers a summary of the substantive goals for the program and the type of speaker desired. PD approves the selection of speakers from a short list or specifically identified individual candidates provided by the recipient. In some cases, PD will identify the requested American expert and provide contact information, if available, to the recipient.
- b) PD determines the arrival and departure dates for each participating location, sets the program duration and schedule, and identifies constraints such as local holidays or weekends. Mission Canada, through PD, supports the traveling expert with staffing and programmatic support in Canada.
- c) PD explains the program purposes and desired outcomes, confirms the topics and types of events at which the speaker will participate, provides background on institutions that will be involved, and identifies cities the speaker will visit and the duration of stay in each city.
- d) PD makes the final decisions to match audiences with a speaker's qualifications.

B) FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: Twenty-four months

Award amounts: awards may range from a minimum of \$60,000.00 to a maximum of \$250,000.00

Type of Funding: FY23 Smith-Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement.

1. Funding Type and Amount: Cooperative Agreement. Minimum (“Floor”) Award Amount: \$60,000. Maximum (“Ceiling”) Award Amount: \$250,000. For budget purposes, please estimate costs for three scenarios with different numbers of in-person programs and a remainder of virtual programs as follows, including as many virtual speakers as possible with the balance of funds in each scenario: 1) 10 in-person speakers, 2) 15 in-person speakers and 3) 20 in-person speakers.

For all budgets, please use a representative in-person program of 5 days (2 international travel days and 3 program days). Please use an average per diem rate (lodging plus meals and incidental expenses) of \$450 per day and an honorarium of USD \$500 per program day in your budget proposal. Be sure the budget includes other normal categories of expense for international travel, e.g., travel insurance, immunizations, ground transportation, etc.

PD anticipates upward of two to four annual programs with published authors. Budgets should include costs related to purchasing the author’s book to distribute to audience members. In the event the program is virtual, shipping costs should be included. For representative virtual programs the recipient will organize logistical arrangements including a virtual platform, interpretation and language services, and closed captioning services, design of an event landing page, and recording of the event. For the programs in which PD identifies the expert, the recipient will provide full logistical and administrative support to the expert.

PD reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described under circumstances deemed to be in the best interest of the U.S. government.

2. Project and Budget Periods: PD contemplates a two-year period of performance for this project for approximately 30 to 60 traveling and virtual speakers. PD will entertain applications for continuation of cooperative agreements funded under this award, within and beyond the initial budget period, on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

C) ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION:

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Non-profits: PD will only accept applications from U.S. and Canadian organizations that are legally registered not-for-profit non-governmental organizations with at least two years of experience working with an expert speaker program.
- Proper and complete registrations and rights: applicants must acquire all required registrations in the United States and/or Canada. All intellectual property considerations and rights must be fully met in the United States and Canada. Local Canadian partners (including sub-grantees) must be not-for-profit.
- Additional requirements may apply.

Other Eligibility Requirements:

To be approved for funding, the recipient must have a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D for information on how to obtain the necessary registrations.

D) APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Register: organizations not registered with grants.gov and SAM.gov should register well in advance of the deadline. It can take weeks to finalize registration (sometimes longer for non-U.S. based organizations). **Registration is free.**
2. Submit proposal: proposals must be submitted to PD via the following email address: Ottawa-PA@state.gov. The subject line of your email must be as follows: “[Your organization’s name] – DOS-Canada-PD-FY23 U.S. Speaker and Specialist Program.” Pursuant to U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001, stated on OMB Standard Form 424 (SF-424), the U.S. Department of State is authorized to consolidate the certifications and assurances required by Federal law or regulations for its federal assistance programs. Please refer to the following link for a list of certifications and assurances: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>
3. English: applications are accepted in English only. Final grant agreements and any subsequent amendments will be concluded in English only.
4. Proposal plus SF-424: when submitting a proposal, applicants are required to fill out a detailed budget and the Federal Assistance Application Standard Form 424. See two attachments “U.S. EMBASSY OTTAWA GRANTS PROPOSAL TEMPLATE” and “SF-424.” While the grant proposal format is somewhat flexible, we recommend you use the template as a starting point and add additional information as necessary. Please insert “[Your organization’s name] – DOS-Canada-PD-FY23 – U.S. Speaker and Specialist Program” in the header, along with page numbers, on every page of your application. Proposals should be no longer than 15 pages.

At the minimum, proposals should include a cover sheet and provide an executive summary of the project description (no more than one page) with reference to the amount and duration of the funding request.

Description and justification: applicants must submit a full description of the organization and project, including goals, objectives, and operations. Include résumés for project partners and key personnel. List those organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution. Describe the organization’s previous experience with similar projects.

Activities: outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors that might accelerate or slow down the work and state reasons for taking the proposed approach rather than alternatives. Describe any unusual features of the project, such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

Accomplishments, monitoring, evaluation, and risk assessment: describe how you plan to monitor the progress of the project and determine overall success and impact of the program. Describe anticipated risks to the project and how the organization intends to manage or mitigate them.

Budget: provide a detailed budget of every cost associated with the project. The more information and detail that you provide about the proposed budget, with a budget narrative, the better we can determine the viability and completeness of your proposal.

For the budget line item “indirect costs” or “administrative overhead,” any figure you provide without a specific breakout will be returned for additional information or rejected. If your organization has an approved “Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement” or NICRA, please note that on your application and provide supporting documentation.

E) APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated based on the criteria enumerated below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed based on their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive within the context of this program announcement.

Applicants will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their proposal. A technical review panel will review the proposal and, based upon the criteria noted below, assess the general qualification. A qualitative determination will be made regarding the program’s proposed area of activity and the Mission’s strategic goals, and those proposals that are deemed to be the best fit will be given additional consideration. A proposal that is approved but not funded will be kept on file for one year should the panel wish to reconsider, or if additional resources become available.

Follow up notification: organizations whose applications were not approved or funded will be notified by email.

Application Evaluation Criteria:

1. Organizational Experience: applicant’s experience and understanding of the U.S. speaker and specialist program, and of international logistics such as the Fly America Act. (25 points)
2. Budget and narrative justification: the budget and narrative justification are complete and reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The plan for services and related cost estimates is realistic. (25 points)
3. Organizational capacity: the organization demonstrates expertise in identifying speakers and arranging logistics for the program. Where project partners are included, the applicant details

each partner's respective role, provides partner organization information and résumés for all persons responsible for the project and its financial administration. (25 points)

4. Flexibility: demonstrated ability to be flexible in face of international program operations, make multiple last-minute changes and still deliver successful programs. (15 points)

5. Monitoring and evaluation: the applying organization describes how to monitor progress of the program and determine its overall success and impact of the program. (10 points)

F) FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Federal Award Notices:

The grant award or cooperative agreement shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the U.S. government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer cooperative agreements and grant agreements. The DS-1909 assistance award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient. The grantee is likely to interact mostly with a Grant Officer Representative (GOR).

Applicants of successful proposals will generally be notified within 30 days after the submission deadline. A "successful proposal" does not commit either the U.S. government or the applicant, until a grant document has been completed, signed and funds officially obligated.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions: Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:

- 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions which are available at: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>.
 - Note the U.S flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

Reporting:

All awards issued under this announcement require both programs and financial reports on a frequency specified in the award agreement. The disbursement of funds may be tied to submission of these reports in a timely manner. All other details related to award administration will be specified in the award agreement. The point of contact for questions or issues related to the administration of the grant will be specified in the award agreement.